



# The Planning Network

## Congratulations Shandon! Energy Challenge Results

By: Cheryl Cochran

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The Shandon community celebrated a successful month of energy savings with a BBQ in the park on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The BBQ was a chance to share the impressive results with the community and thank residents and business owners for participating in the first rural community month-long

“Energy Challenge”. The challenge was a combined effort between the County’s energy team, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo. In all, 10 businesses and 27 homeowners participated for a combined annual savings of \$10,346 for business, and \$5,858 for households. That’s an average of \$1,035 per business and \$217 per household! Although these energy savings programs are available year-round to all eligible San Luis Obispo County residents and business owners (funding permitting), the month-long Energy Challenge was a focused marketing effort to help one community implement energy saving projects to save as much as possible in a single month. The next two communities slated for an energy challenge in 2014 will be Santa Margarita and Oceano. For more information on energy programs, contact the County energy team at 805-781-5623. Or for information about income qualified weatherization services, contact CAPSLO directly at 805-541-4122.

The Planning and Building Department’s Mission Statement:

*Promoting the Wise Use of Land*

*Helping to Build Great Communities*

Pictured in Photo: Jeff Oliveria



We’re on the web!  
<http://SLOPLANNING.ORG>

## Meet the Staff — Suzan Ehdaie

Every quarter, a different staff member will be featured.



Believe it or not, English is my first language. Throughout my life, I have lived in many different places, starting with living in Michigan for the first four years of my life in the late 1960s. I lived through and survived the harsh winters in East Lansing and ate a lot of cereal as we lived next to the famous Kellogg Farm. This was my first time in the U.S. and it was a very important time because it predestined my final arrival back to the States in 1985. I also came back in 1976 for one year and finished 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Davis, California.

People think that I translate English to Persian and vice versa, but my brain does not work that way. I have two language switches. If I see you, I will turn on the switch to English to connect with you. And when I see my family and relatives, I turn on the other switch for Persian at the same time the switch for English is on. So I speak Anglo-Persian to them. If you see me speaking strangely these days, it is the Cee-Dee-Bee-Gee talk that I learned while working for the Housing team at the County of SLO.

How on earth did I end up here? I call it being super lucky and to top it off, I am surrounded by wonderful colleagues. I used to work in high tech in the heartland of Silicon Valley during the boom and bust years. I collaborated with great minds from Russia, Germany, France, India, China,

Vietnam, Ireland, Japan, Australia, and Italy to deliver software applications to the entire world. Then I moved to New York City and worked for a financial firm (Solomon Bothers) at the Twin Towers. However, I missed my family and friends so I came back to California working for Steve Jobs, speaking computer languages and designing algorithms. Around this time, high tech jobs were being outsourced to India and China, and I worked with teams in India. Given the different time zones, this required putting in many long hours. I went back to school and got my MBA from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with emphases in Finance and City Planning. I changed careers by working for the cities of Monterey and Greenfield where I picked up Spanish. Then luck had it that I moved back to San Luis Obispo, and began working for the County of San Luis Obispo.

Now, I enjoy the meaningful work I do with the Housing team, the beauty of nature, knitting, and being with wonderful colleagues, friends, and family.



## Central Coast in Midst of Recovery

By Tony Navarro



brought together community and business leaders to hear Beacon Economics' 2014 economic projections for the Central Coast region. The outlook is optimistic with expected growth in all job sectors in 2014.

The region's economic recovery grew in 2013 and is expected to recover from the recession. According to Beacon Econom-

The 2013 Central Coast Economic Forecast

ics, San Luis Obispo County is one of four leading regions in California to exceed its pre-recession peak. Tourism and the wine industry play a large role in job creation, contributing to one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state at 6.5% with a projected rate of 6.2 in 2014. In fact, the region regained 11,400 jobs compared to the 11,200 lost during the recession.

Job increases contributed to the County leading in domestic new growth spending,

contributing to increased taxable sales. The local real estate market is also driving growth contributing to increased home sales and the median price of a single-family home in 2013 at \$442,301 compared to \$383,567 in 2012 and a low rental vacancy rate of about 1.5%.

In short, the region's economic outlook is very optimistic and a strong recovery is expected to continue in 2014.



# Not Just Another Economic Summit

By Dana Lilley



**#CAECONOMY.ORG**

On November 7 and 8, 2013, 450 business, civic and government leaders got together to identify needed actions and volunteer to assist in implementing those actions to foster vibrant economic regions throughout the State. The second annual California Economic Summit

was a success, but not because 450 people got together and worked hard for two days at the summit. Nor was it a success because nearly a dozen California legislators attended the event. Far more important was the work accomplished in months of preparation for the summit and the commitments people made to continue this important work into the future.

Encouraged by the first-ever 2012 California Economic Summit, seven action teams formed to identify what's needed for the various economic regions in the state to prosper. California does not have a single economy, but rather a collection of diverse industries and economic regions. Here is a list of the action teams: Workforce, Infrastructure, Regulations, Advancing Manufacturing, Working Landscapes, Capital and Housing.

Those action teams collaborated to create an excellent road map to a more economically vibrant California entitled the 2013 California Economic Summit Playbook, which can be read or downloaded for free at the following link: <http://www.caeconomy.org/pages/playbook-2013>.

Here is one example of the proposed actions identified in the Playbook under the Manufacturing action team: "Promote science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) career awareness at all levels of education to increase the number of students pursuing careers in technology." (page 31).

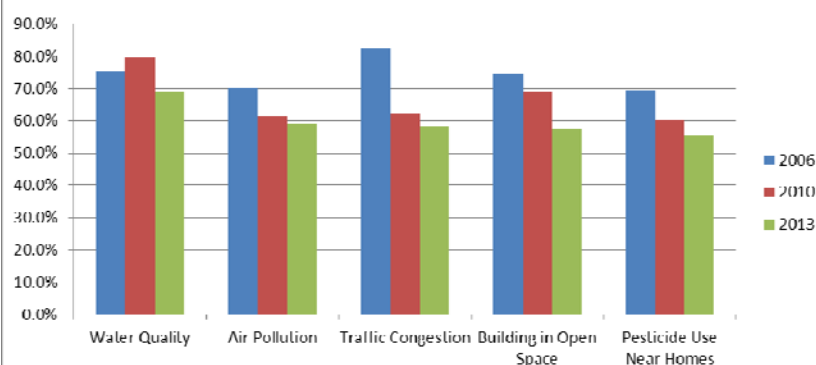
Would you like to know more about this important initiative? Go to the California Economic Summit web page:

<http://www.caeconomy.org/resources/entry/2013-summit-report>

## Vital Signs—Understanding San Luis Obispo County

A Trend Report Released by ACTION for Healthy Communities

How concerned are you about the following issues in your community? (Respondents Answering "Very concerned" or "Somewhat concerned")



The latest and sixth periodic quality of life indicator report by ACTION for Healthy Communities was released on December 3, 2013. The new title, "Vital Signs – Understanding San Luis Obispo County" that reflects the report's ability to highlight key community issues for local agencies and organizations to monitor as they conduct their work. The top concern of telephone survey respondents overall was uncontrolled growth/growing too fast. This held true for all sub-regions, except North County where water was the number one concern. With specific regard to our physical environment, the top three issues of concern were: water quality (69%), air pollution (59%) and traffic (58%). Since 2006, there has been a steady

decline in the percentage of respondents who were "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned."

*Vital Signs – Understanding San Luis Obispo County* is based on primary (public opinion) and secondary (empirical trend) data that are gathered for a series of indicators in seven areas: basic needs, education, the economy, health, physical environment, public safety, and social environment.

The full comprehensive report is available on-line at [www.ActionSLO.org](http://www.ActionSLO.org) ACTION for Healthy Communities is a collaborative of individual agencies and public and

private organizations committed to improving the overall quality of life in San Luis Obispo County. ACTION completed its first benchmark study of community issues in 1999. For further information contact ACTION for Healthy Communities c/o The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County, 550 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

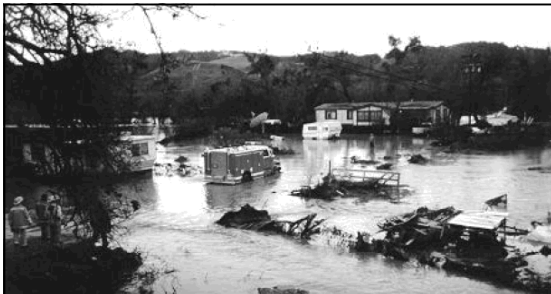
By Janice Fong Wolf  
Director of Grants & Programs  
The Community Foundation

**THE Community FOUNDATION**  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

## County Responsibilities Under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

GUEST CORNER

By Tim Tomlinson, Flood Plain Manager, Public Works



The Federal government requires that structures in areas subject to 100 year flooding, constructed or purchased with loans backed by the Federal government, purchase flood insurance. Flood insurance is normally only available in jurisdictions that are participants in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The County joined the NFIP to allow flood insurance to be available here, and in so doing we agreed to enforce the flood protection requirements put forth in the Code of Federal Regulations. This requires us to attempt to protect both people and structures from damage due to flooding. To do so we regulate construction within and outside of the 100 year flood zones delineated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS).

This naturally falls under our County's goal of promoting the health and safety of our populace. Some of the methods that the County uses to accomplish that goal are:

- ◇ The County is obligated to try and dissuade people from developing in flood prone areas. If development is to occur within an area where flooding is expected, we require that the development not only protect its own residents from inundation and its structures from damage, but that it accommodate the existing flooding and not just "push it off" onto another property.
- ◇ Following FEMA requirements, additions and alterations to existing (pre-NFIP) structures are reviewed to determine if they require modification or replacement to bring them into compliance with current flood protection requirements. This also applies to repairs made to structures damaged by flooding.

The Public Works and Planning and Building Departments review projects (Land Use Applications and Building and Grading Permits) to enforce these regulations.

## How Homeless Grant Programs Help

By Morgan Torell

Did you know that the County manages over \$1 million of federal grant funds to house and case manage homeless individuals and families countywide? The Continuum of Care (CoC) program provides funds for Transitions Mental Health Association and Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO) to house 20 people in transitional housing and 32



people in permanent supportive housing. It also provides funds for case management and other supportive services to many more people experiencing homelessness countywide.

In fact, over 400 people received assistance from this program alone in the last program year.

One formerly homeless man that moved into one of these permanent housing units was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He lost his full-time job, his car, his housing, and the thing most important to him - his relationship with his daughter. He was alone and homeless for the first time in his life, and he feared he would never be able to regain the things he had lost. By working with a case manager in the shelter, together they developed a path to a home. He met the criteria for CAPSLO's North County Permanent Housing program and moved into his unit in March 2012. He since was awarded his full Social Security Disability income. He saved money and was able to purchase a used car. Most importantly, he

reconnected with family and was present for the birth of his first and only grandchild.

In addition to the 52 total beds in the CoC program, the County also funds two tenant based rental assistance programs from the federal HOME and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds. These programs provide temporary rental assistance and deposits for people who are homeless or about to become homeless. The HOME funded program (operated by the Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo) helped 59 households in fiscal year 2012-2013 and the ESG funded program (operated by the Central Coast LINK) has helped over 60 households so far in its first year of operation.



# Inspection Tips — Radiant Floor Heating Equals Warm Feet

By David Rose



Hi! I'm David R. Rose, south county building inspector and the new writer of the Inspection Tips previously written by the recently retired Bob Rudio. Let's get my first article rolling!

Virtually all of the homes on the central coast have forced air units (fau's) that provide the space heating for the interior of these homes. LP gas (propane) and natural gas are the two fuels of choice, with natural gas being the most widely used. Warm air generated by fau's is delivered through a series of ducts into registers and then into individual rooms usually through the ceiling registers, and the warm air at the top displaces the cold air elsewhere.

Radiant floor heating is much different from heated air. It starts out warm at the floor and through natural convection rises to the top of the room. In the photo on the right, the plastic heating piping has been laid out, looped and attached to the concrete slab reinforcement with tie wire. The rebar and heating piping is sandwiched approximately in the middle of this 5 inch concrete slab on grade. Rigid foam insulation required by Title 24 of the energy code is not seen here but will be installed near the moisture membrane. In the photo on the left, a manifold is installed in a closet or other location that helps divert the warm water into separate locations in a house.

Individual thermostats in each room regulate the temperature. Radiant floor heating is connected to an instant hot water heater or regular tank style heater and is installed in a closed loop system—none of the water in this entire radiant floor heating system is introduced into the domestic water supply. Approximately 25 gallons of distilled water will remain in this system for several years.

At the concrete slab-radiant floor heating inspection, this entire system was tested at 100 psi and that pressure level integrity must be maintained throughout the concrete pour to make sure there are no accidents that puncture the pipe (really, really bad news!) After all this has been completed and the house is near completion and the hot water heater of choice installed, this system operates at a much lower pressure of about 15 psi.

The inspection code 3 digit request is: "460, radiant floor heating" and can be scheduled by phone at 788-2076 or at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Page786.aspx>



## Using Social Media to Keep You Informed

By Jennifer Jimenez



**Subscribe and Watch us  
on YouTube**

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, view and share videos. Viewing YouTube videos on a personal computer needs the Adobe Flash Player plug-in to be installed on the browser. On our Department's YouTube channel we will post instructional videos, such as step-by-step computer help, do-it-yourself guides, and other how-to videos. Public workshop videos, informational videos about our department and services, and even events such as the Energy Event will be posted. Subscribe to our account to make sure every time we upload something new you are notified.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/SLOCoPlanning/videos>

We now use tools like Facebook to help keep the public informed of our department's work and to share information. Social networks expand the outreach capabilities and improve our ability to interact with and serve the public. We are excited to build a stronger social connection to the citizens we represent. Like us on Facebook to get information on the area we live in, services we provide, upcoming workshops, energy saving tips, meeting agendas and so much more! <https://www.facebook.com/SLOPlanning>



**Like us on Facebook to keep up to  
date with meetings, workshops,  
news and upcoming events.**

## Solar Projects on the Carizzo— January 2014 Update

By John McKenzie



Topaz Solar Farm (Topaz) remains under construction and the California Valley Solar Ranch (CVSR) is now complete and fully energized. The combined total of construction/operations workers on-site on any given day is about 600. Combined, these power-generating facilities will ultimately provide 800 megawatts (MW) of electricity, which would be equivalent to serving about 320,000 homes.

Topaz is currently constructing all of its six phases, and related electrical components. Approximately 51 percent (281 MW) of the project has energized and is

connected to PG&E. As individual 'blocks' are completed they will each go 'live', ultimately generating a total of 550 MW. After about two years of construction, CVSR is now fully 'energized' and selling its permitted 250 MW of electricity back to PG&E.

PG&E has completed construction of the two permanent switchyards that connect the solar plants to PG&E's transmission lines. The 35-miles of transmission line upgrades to increase line capacity and electricity distribution has also been completed.

Planning and Building Department staff continues to work through the many associated building permits. Thousands of acres of conservation lands have been acquired for biological resource protection. Biologists and environmental monitors are on-site daily to ensure construction impacts are minimal to neighboring properties and native wildlife. The sites are collectively employing hundreds of construction workers.

Topaz is on track with its construction

schedule. Both projects have excelled in compliance of project permit conditions, protection of limited or sensitive resources, and have been responsive to community concerns and needs.

The project applicants and the County are maintaining, and continuously updating, websites on the two projects to keep the public informed. Access to these websites begins at the County Planning's website at <http://www.sloplanning.org>



**Megawatts Approved – 800**

**Current Output – 531 MWs/day**

**Daily Average - 600 Workers**

## Board Defines Vested Right—Urgency Ordinance

By Kami Griffin

On August 27, 2013, the Board of Supervisors adopted an Urgency Ordinance to establish a moratorium on new or expanded irrigated crop production and new development, dependent upon a well in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (PRGWB), unless such uses offset their total projected water use by a ratio of 1:1. The ordinance specifies exemptions to the ordinance including an exemption that reads: *Where satisfactory evidence can be provided that, prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, an applicant has secured a vested right to complete site preparation, planting, or sale of product.*

After an outreach effort with residents and agriculturalists, on November 26, 2013 the Board approved a resolution that outlines a procedure to use when staff is

presented with a request for a Vesting Rights Exemption from Ordinance 3246.

The resolution has three requirements that need to be met in every circumstance. These are that prior to August 27, 2013: (1) a valid well permit was applied for and accepted as complete - including payment of any required fees, (2) the well was installed or a contract was entered into with a licensed well driller for installation of the well and (3) the applicant owned the land or had entered into an irrevocable lease for the specific purpose of agriculture.

If the parcel (or parcels if there is contiguous property owned by the same individual) is greater than 20 acres in size, there are additional requirements that will need to be met. There are two types of

requirements, one for permanent crops (i.e. vineyard, orchard, tree fruits, tree nuts) and another for annual crops (i.e. grains, field crops, vegetables, field fruits, flower fields and seed production, ornamental crops, irrigated pasture).

Individuals who are wishing to rely on the vested right exemption will need to provide the evidence as described in the resolution to the Department of Planning and Building prior to the establishment of the new irrigated crop. The Department will review the evidence and render a written decision.

If you would like to read the resolution it can be found at:

<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/commguidelines/PRgroundwater.htm>



# The Simplest Ways to Save on Energy Bills

By: Cheryl Cochran



Photo by Carlos Paes via Wikimedia Commons

Home energy efficiency or even renewable energy may have crossed your mind during the cold spell this winter, but an investment with significant upfront costs may not be in the cards just yet. While a home energy audit is the only way to find out where all of your precious heated (or cooled) air is going, there are free and very low cost measures you can implement right away to start saving energy. Besides, using less energy should be the first

(and cheapest) step in any energy savings plan.

- 1) **Ceiling fans are not just for summer.** Fan blades run in a counterclockwise direction during the summer. Reversing the direction and setting the fan on its slowest speed can help push the warm air down to human level.
- 2) **Bigger pots and pans waste less.** A 6 inch pot on an 8 inch burner wastes over 40% of the burner's heat. Use the right size pot and cover it to keep the heat in. This method can save about \$36 annually for electric stoves or \$18 for gas.
- 3) **Slay vampire loads!** U.S. households spend about \$100 per year on power devices in low power mode. Use power strips

for your computer and all peripheral equipment to eliminate standby power consumption. Measure exactly how much power is being wasted by checking out a kill-a-watt meter <http://sloenergyalliance.org/residential-resources/kill-a-watt-ez-meter-lending-program/>

- 4) **Laundry doesn't need spa treatment.** Washing clothes in cold water can save the average household \$40 annually (electric water heater) or \$30 annually (gas water heater).
- 5) **Be lazy with the dishes.** You use less hot water using a dishwasher than washing dishes by hand – up to 2,000 gallons a year less! Turn off the heated dry mode for even more savings.

There are many more tips where those came from! Visit [sloenergyalliance.org](http://sloenergyalliance.org) or call 805-781-5623 for energy saving resources.



Photo by grongar (originally posted to Flickr)

## Reservoir Update

Reservoir	Date	Water Elevation (ft)	Spillway Elevation (ft)	Storage (acre-feet)	Capacity (%)
Nacimiento Reservoir	December 18, 2013 December 18, 2012	728.5 747.6	787.75 - 800.0 (w/gates fully inflated)	88,475 142,715	23% 38%
Lopez Reservoir	December 19, 2013 December 19, 2012	495.9 508.1	522.7	28,544 37,157	58% 75%
Salinas Reservoir (Santa Margarita Lake)	December 19, 2013 December 19, 2012	1274.8 1284.4	1300.7	9,624 13,819	40% 58%
Whale Rock Reservoir	December 17, 2013 December 17, 2012	181.8 193.4	216.0	23,219 28,453	57% 70%
Twitchell Reservoir	December 19, 2013 December 19, 2012	532.1 < 539	651.5	475 < 3,500	0.2% < 2%

Note: In 2012, Twitchell Reservoir elevation gauge did not report values below 539 ft. Twitchell Reservoir was designed for protection from flood and drought. Excess rain runoff is stored in the reservoir protecting the valley from flood, then water is released as quickly as possible while still allowing it to recharge the groundwater basin.

## Reservoir Summary

By James Caruso

The 2012-2013 water year saw well below average rainfall throughout the county. Reservoir levels have continued to drop. Lake Nacimiento serves the cities of Paso Robles, Atascadero and San Luis Obispo and the community of Templeton. Whale Rock Reservoir serves San Luis Obispo and Cayucos. Santa Margarita Lake serves the City of San Luis Obispo and California Men's Colony. Lopez Lake in South County serves the cities of Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach and the community of Oceano. Most cities and communities also use groundwater to meet water demand.

You can get more info at <http://www.slocountywater.org/site/Water%20Resources/Data/maps/reservoir-storage.htm>

## Upcoming Events...



**Jan 16—Workshop for 2014 Federal Funding Recommendations for CDBG, HOME and ESG, 5:00 pm, 6500 Palma Ave, Atascadero, contact 781-4974 for more information.**

**Jan 20—Workshop for 2014 Federal Funding Recommendations for CDBG, HOME and ESG, 5:00 pm, 300 E. Branch St, Arroyo Grande, contact 781-4974 for more information.**

**Feb 4—HVAC Training, 9am—4:30pm, PG&E Education Center, 6588 Ontario Road, SLO, register at [www.pge.com/pec/classes/6860.htm](http://www.pge.com/pec/classes/6860.htm)**

**March 5—Santa Margarita Energy Challenge Kick-off Event, contact 781-5623 for more info.**

**March 24th—Oceano Energy Challenge Kick-off Event, 5:30 pm, 1655 Front Street, Oceano, contact 781-5623 for more info.**

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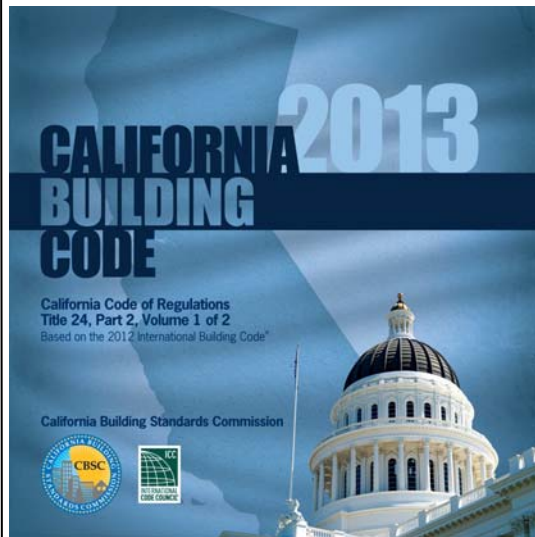
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to you by the  
Communications Team  
of the  
Department of  
Planning and  
Building

Please submit ideas for  
the next issue to  
**Jennifer Jimenez**  
[jjimenez@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jjimenez@co.slo.ca.us)



## Cali—Codes Updated!

By Steve Hicks



This coming year we will see a new edition, 2013, of the California Building Code (CBC) issued. All of the proposed changes are in place and the Building Standards Commission (BSC) approved the 2013 edition of Title 24. The effective date is January 2014. This new edition of the CBC is based on the 2012 International Building Code (IBC).

Some of the changes are coming from the International Code Conference (ICC) and the national level. The State continues to refine and adjust their amendments to the IBC. The biggest exception will continue to be Chapter 11B, Disabled Access for Public Accommodations. What you will see when the code is published is that Chapter 11B will look like the 2010 ADA Standards in format, which is totally different from what we have today. The format is the same as ANSI A-117.1 for the IBC. The document has been amended to death. The basic rules for writing the new Chapter 11B were to use the 2010 Standard as the model and bring forward any State amendments. It is more restrictive.

There are a lot of good things to be found in the new document. Dimensional tolerances with maximums and minimums along with ranges are found throughout. Also, there will be a “Safe Harbor” clause related to the 2010 California Building Code (CBC). Anything that complies with the 2010 edition of the code will not be required to change to comply with the 2013 code. This is the first time the State has recognized this. This comes from the ADA, where anything that complies with the original Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) need not be changed to comply with the 2010 Standards. The key to this is going to be documentation by the architect or owner that what had been installed did comply with the previous applicable document(s). Remember that compliance with the 2010 Standards for the ADA are now already in effect.

The following are some of the other major changes to the CBC to keep in mind and be ready to apply:

- All definitions are moved to Chapter 2.
- Backup fire pump for high-rise buildings.
- Smoke alarms (detectors) are required to have 10-year batteries and the units need to be replaced every 10-years.

There have been changes to the Residential, Electrical, Plumbing, Green and Mechanical codes. A quick review of those changes can be found on our website at [sloplanning.org](http://sloplanning.org).

The 2013 California Energy Code has been put off and will not be effective until July 1, 2014.

